



The Fairy Godmother -in-law

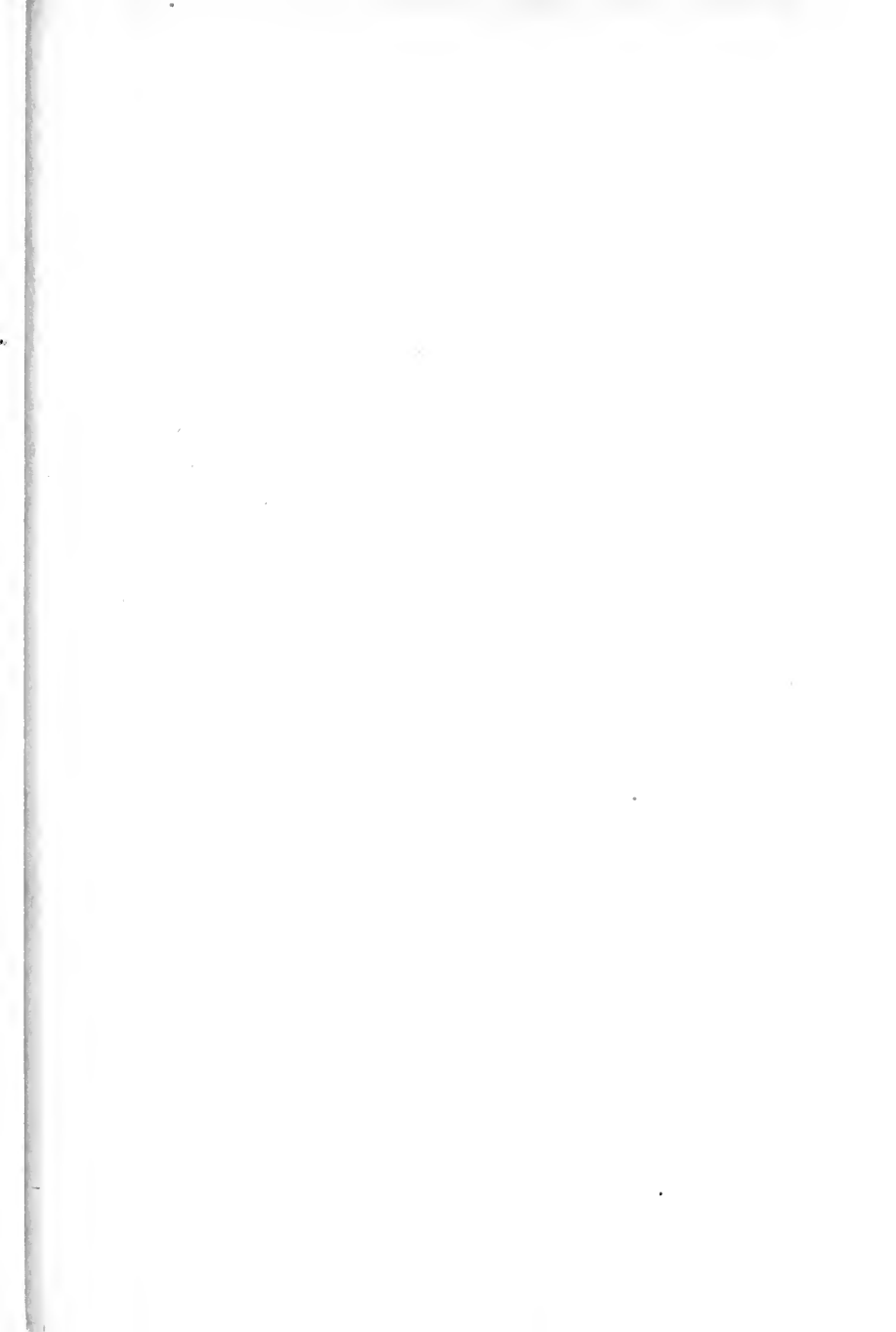


Oliver Herford

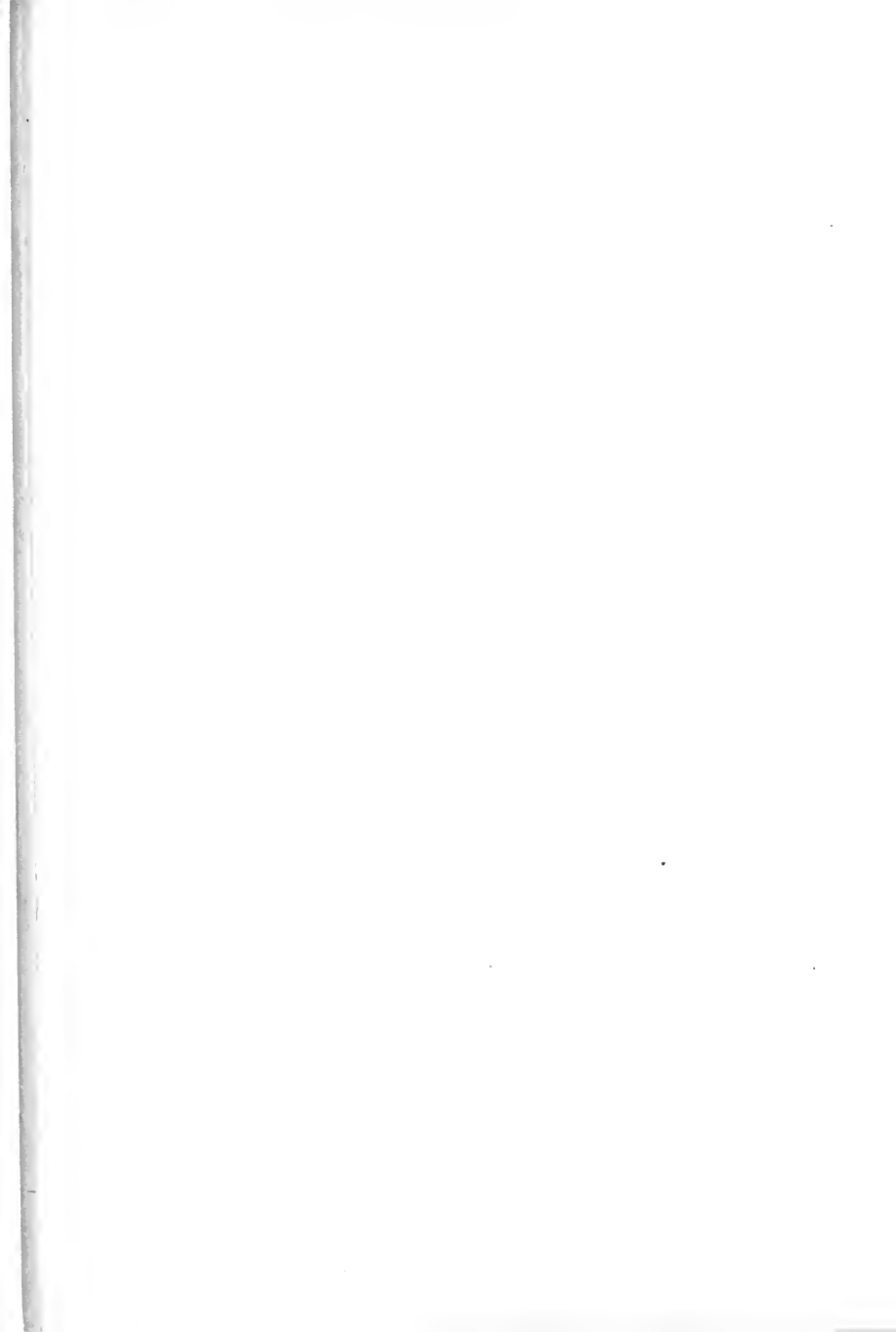


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THE FAIRY
GODMOTHER-IN-LAW

BOOKS BY OLIVER HERFORD

WITH PICTURES BY THE AUTHOR

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The Fairy Godmother-in-Law

By
Oliver Herford



*With Some Pictures
By the Author*

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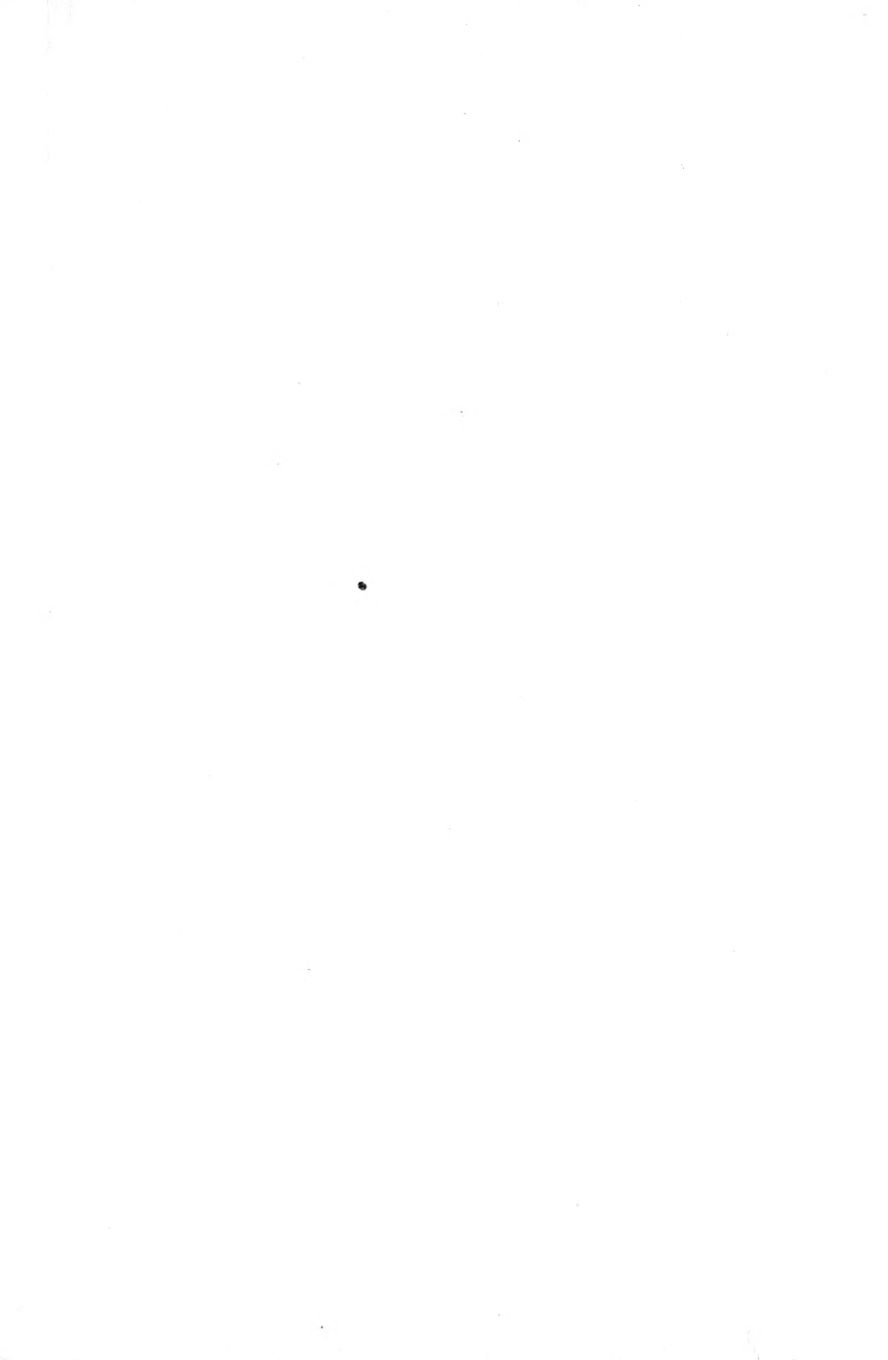
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To M. H.

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**THE FAIRY
GODMOTHER-IN-LAW**

PREFACE

*It is not always well to place
Unbounded Faith in Fairy Lore,
Believing that in every case
They all lived Happy evermore.*

*Stranger than Fiction though we deem
The Truth, it does not follow, too,
That Fairy Tales, because they seem
Still Stranger, must be still more True.*

*Far be it from me to assail
The Truthfulness of Fairy Writ,
But let us take a Well-Known Tale
And see what really came of it.*

I

THE WEDDING

When Cinderella wed the Prince
She thought him all her Fancy Painted,
And this was not surprising since
They were not very Well Acquainted.
While he, not dreaming where she got
Glass slippers, counted on a *Dot*.

The Prince was Brave, Industrious, Wise:
Brave in bright Silks and Satins gay,
Wise in the Lore of Ladies' Eyes,
And most Industrious—at Play ;
A Leader, too—in Fashion's Set ;
And Deep—that is to say, in Debt.



Who was the Somebody of Note?
 (I never could remember names)
Was it Mark Twain or Mr. Choate
 Or Mrs. Ward or Henry James
That penn'd those words of Wise Import,
“Who weds in haste repents—in court”?

But let us not Anticipate.

 The Princess wore a Plain Gold Frock;
No Fairy Dress to spoil the fête
 By vanishing at Twelve o'clock.
This time no Spell her pleasure blighted--
Her god-mamma was not invited.

Not that she really meant to flout
Her Benefactress ; but you see
She had not told the Prince about
Her Fairy Godmother, lest he
Might change his mind if he foresaw
A Fairy God-mamma-in-law.

A Fairy may be Good or Ill,
A Godmother Morose or Gay ;
A Mother-in-law, say what you will,
Is not immortal any way.
But wouldn't it a Bridegroom stun
To think of all three rolled in one?



II

THE LETTER

All day the envelope she scann'd.

But though her royal name it bore,
'Twas in an Unfamiliar Hand.

The Postmark puzzled her still more.
The Princess could not understand
Who'd write to her from——



She turned it Left, she turned it Right,
She pinched it, shook it too and fro,
She held it up against the Light,
And topsy-turvy wise—but no,
It still continued to preserve
Its air of Self-contained Reserve.

One day the Princess in a Pet,
It was her Last, her only hope,
Summoned her Trusty Cabinet,
To Sit upon the Envelope,
And at no matter what expense,
To end her Terrible Suspense.

But all their Learned Consultations
Ended in Nought, for what avail
Mere Man's Unerring Calculations
Where WOMAN'S Intuitions fail?
Their Weighty Brains refused to cope
With that Unyielding Envelope.

She put the matter in the Hands
Of the Police ; she went to see
Astrologers from Foreign Lands
And experts in Chirography ;
And offered Large Rewards to all
Who furnished Clues, however small.

But no one came for the Reward,
Nor would the Envelope betray
The Secret in its bosom stored,
When by the Merest Chance one day
She overheard a Child, who cried,
“If it were mine, I’d look inside.”

Tossing the Tot a Thousand Pounds,
The Princess to her Chamber sped;
Her Joy and Rapture knew no bounds;
She tore the Envelope and read

A note from god-mamma, to say,
She might expect her any day.

III

THE VISIT

One day as Cinderella ate
Her Simple Lunch of sixteen courses,
A Golden Coach drove up in state,
Drawn by a team of Mouse-Grey
horses,
And on the carriage door were scrolled
The Letters F. G. M., in gold

The Princess dropped a Jelly Roll,
Which tipped with Pink her Crystal
Shoe,
And cried, "O my prophetic soul!
My God-mamma! What shall I do?"
Then, Ladylike, she cut the knot
By simply fainting on the spot.



Strong Fairy Salts soon brought her to.

She looked up in a startled way.

“Why, God-mamma—can that be you?”

How sweet! I *hope* you’ve come to stay.
The Prince will simply be enchanted.’

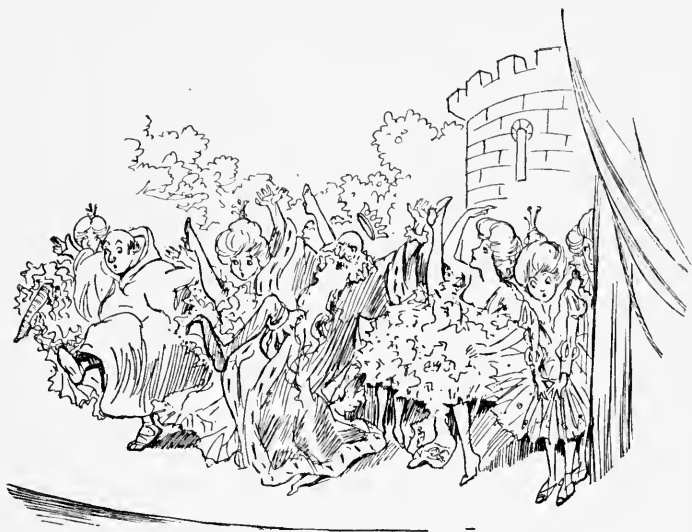
“Your Wish,” quoth God-mamma, “is
granted.”

True to her word, the Fairy soon
Was quite at home. The royal Attic
She turned into a Grand Saloon,
Where with her cats she reigned
ecstatic.
“Henceforth,” said she, “I’ll live at lei-
sure,
And only work my Spells for pleasure.”

She had a Sense of Humor dry,
She loved her Little Joke—and tho’
None of her Tricks were prompted by
A spiteful heart or love of show,
To love one’s Joke does not, it’s true,
Imply that Others love it too.

She had a disconcerting way,
When Argument became a bore,
Of saying what she had to say
And disappearing through the Floor,
A joke that never failed to cause
A weird, if not side-splitting, Pause.

At meals, if there appeared a dish
God-mamma did not find appealing,
She'd wave her wand, and Fowl or Fish
Would promptly vanish thro' the ceiling,
And in its place would be *Fried Mole*
Or *Crocodile en casserole*.



One day some Ladies of the Court
Performed a Play which bored her so,
She up and cried, "That's not my sort!"
And changed it to a Ballet show.
A Tactless Joke, which caused, of course,
Much talk—and more than one Divorce.

But nothing gave her such delight,
Or keener Sense of Humor showed,
Than when the Prince came home at night;
She'd change his door-key to a Toad,
And laugh to see it hop about,
Or turn the Key-Hole inside out.

Once, weary of her Pesterings,
The Prince apostrophized a bird,
Exclaiming, "Would I too had wings!"
It chanced the Fairy overheard,
And, with the very best intentions,
Granted him wings of Large Dimensions.

Now wings (as any Naturalist
Will tell you) are but variations
Of arms, and cannot co-exist
With such-like Brachial Formations.
Accordingly, he lost his arms,
Which handicaps a Prince's charms.

To his embarrassment and woe,
He had to be both dressed and fed
And brushed and bathed and put— but no,
That he was spared. His Wings when
spread
Were Forty Feet from side to side;
Bed was a luxury denied.



He soon repented of his
Whim.

With wings like wind-
mill sails, of course,
No room was big enough for him.

So all night long, in Chill Remorse,
He perched upon the roof. At dawn
The spell was happily withdrawn.

About this time the Princess planned
A grand Subscription Ball, to aid
The Starving Shepherds of the land.
The Prince, when told the shepherds'
trade
Included Shepherdesses too,
Subscribed a Thumping I. O. U.

Upon the evening of the ball,
It chanced that God-mamma-in-law,
Flitting about the Palace Hall,
Passed by the Prince's Suite, and saw
His gladsome Evening Robes outspread
In neat array upon the bed.

She eyed them sadly. Here in places
The silken pile was wearing thin ;
And here were stains and here were traces
Of where the Moth had broken in.
“Aha ! Aha ! it’s plain to see
This is a little job for me !

“ I’ll make him a new suit,” said she,
“ A brave new suit without a flaw.
I’d like to know what Home would be
Without a God-mamma-in-law.”
And in its place upon the bed
A Fairy Substitute she spread.

All unobserved, she slipped away,
Delighted with her Little Game,
And, seeking some new trick to play,
To Cinderella's closet came.
Where for her golden robe of state
She left a Fairy Duplicate.

Dressed for the ball, they drove in State,
Looking superlatively swell ;
God-mamma pleaded *mal de tête*
And from her window waved farewell.
Her voice rose o'er the people's cheers,
“ *Be back at twelve o'clock my dears !* ”

IV

THE BALL

Before the splendors of the Ball
The Boldest Metaphor grows tame ;
Superlatives abjectly crawl
Back to their lexicon in shame,
And Synonyms in shrieking chorus
Take refuge in the deep Thesaurus.

But language has its Pioneers,
Who seek Fresh Words and Postures
new,
Slang rushes in where Syntax fears
To tread—so I for Ade halloo,
And say (with George's kind permission)
It was "*A Heated Proposition.*"

The Princess never dreamed her frock
Of gold was wrought by fairy power.
And set, like an alarming Clock,
To go off at the midnight hour.
Her childish laugh rang with delight :
“ *Thank God*-mamma’s not here to-night.”

Prince Charming looked his very best
To—I mean at—the Ladies Fair ;
No dread foreboding stirred his breast ;
No Writing on the Wall was there
To Tell him of the Awful Shock
Awaiting him at Twelve O’clock.

V

MIDNIGHT

Again (see chapter on *The Ball*)

The Boldest Metaphor grows tame ;
Superlatives abjectly crawl

Back to their lexicon in shame,
And Synonyms in shrieking chorus
Take refuge in the deep Thesaurus.

But every cloud that bars the sun

They say with silverwear is lined ;
And tho' they felt they were Undone,

Their Highnesses were cheered to find
At midnight when their Robes took wings,
They kept their—well, their Other Things.



Perchance, Dear Reader,
you have noted
In that Department
which to Trade is
By Monthly Magazines
devoted,

The Pleasant Gentle-
men and Ladies
Whose Union Suits our
souls bewitch—
The Simple Flannels of
the Rich.



Even arrayed as one of these,
In Homespun stood the Royal Twain,
While people cried, on bended knees,
“Long live their Majesties ! who deign
Thus by example to Restore
Our Woolen Industry of Yore !”

Thro' all the Land the Tidings sped
From Door to Door, from Wife to
Wife,
Thro' all the Land the Fashion spread
For Woolen and the Simple Life.
New looms sprang up on every hand
And shepherds prospered in the land.

.

Poor God-mamma, 'twas her last caper;
One night to throw some Light about
She changed herself into a Taper,
And Cinderella blew her out.
The Princess then divorced the Prince,
And Both lived Happy Ever Since.



THE CHARM THAT FAILED



THE Hero of my tale
Was a serpent—don't turn
pale!
My snake was not the "ser-
pent" of Theology
With an apple up his sleeve
To tempt some child of
Eve,
Nor was he versed in deadly Toxicology.
No, his fangs were free from guile,
And he had a roomy smile.
There was no more harmless snake in all
Zoology.

But since no creature known
Is perfect, I will own
He had one failing—vanity, alas ! innate.
He was also fond of sport,
Though not a cruel sort :
His aim was more to charm than to assass-
sinate.
He was often heard to say,
When feeling rather gay,
“ I’d like to see the Bird I cannot fas-
cinate ! ”

*And one day
Some laughter-loving Fay
His boasting heard,
And sent a Bird.*



It was sitting, stuffed and stiff on
A thing of straw and chiffon,
Ribbands and lace and jet and such like
finery,
By a milliner begotten
And some careless maid forgotten,

In stuffed and lonely splendor in the
Vinery,
When with expectant eye
Mr. Serpent, by and by,
Strolled forth in search of game from out
the Pinery.

*And the Bird
Never stirred
Or said a word.*

“Aha!” said Mr. Snake,
“Unless I much mistake,
Here’s a charming subject for a Trance
Hypnotic;
Soon I’ll have her in my toils!”
And with mysterious coils

He advanced with air complacent and des-
potic.

Then he rose up, and let fly
A glance from out his eye,
And watched for the effect of his narcotic.

*And the Bird
Never stirred
Or said a word.*

Said Mr. Snake, "My spell
Seems to work extremely well."
And straightway with Majestic Pride he
puffed,
But when an hour had pass'd,
And still the Bird stood fast,

I must confess he felt a trifle huff'd.

“There's something wrong,” said he,

“With the Bird—or else with me.”

How should he know the wretched thing
was stuffed?

That Bird,

Who never stirred

Or said a word.

Mr. Snake was sorely troubled,

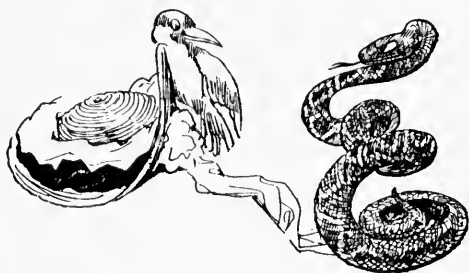
And his efforts he redoubled,

And he balanced on the tip end of his tail,

Swaying to and fro the while

Like a pendulum—a style

That hitherto he'd never known to fail.
But not a word she uttered,
And not a feather fluttered
As he plied his mystic Art without avail.



“Confound the bird!” he said,
And he stood upon his head
And waved his long mysterious tail in air,
And he focussed all the rays
Of his esoteric gaze

Into one cold and petrifying glare.
But the Deadly Glance fell wide ;
He might as well have tried
To hypnotize a table or a chair—

*As that Bird,
Who never stirred
Or said a word.*

“That settles it!” he cried.
“I will not be defied!”
And he coiled himself to spring—oh, rash
proceeding!
Like an arrow from a bow
He sprang—how should he know

The Doom to which he was so swiftly
speeding?

Next moment he lay dead,
With a Hat Pin through his head,
Whereat, with most commendable good-
breeding—

The Bird
Never stirred
Or said a word.





THE SILVER QUESTION

THE Sun appeared so smug and
bright,

One day, that I made bold
To ask him what he did each night
With all his surplus gold.

He flushed uncomfortably red,
And would not meet my eye.
“I travel round the world,” he said,
“And travelling rates are high.”



With frigid glance I pierced him
through.

He squirmed and changed his
tune.

Said he: "I will be frank with you:
I lend it to the Moon.

“Poor thing! You know she’s growing
old

And hasn’t any folk.

She suffers terribly from cold,

And half the time she’s broke.”

.

That evening on the beach I lay

Behind a lonely dune,

And as she rose above the bay

I buttonholed the Moon.

“Tell me about that gold,” said I.

I saw her features fall.

“You see, it’s useless to deny;

The Sun has told me all.”

“Sir!” she exclaimed, “how *can* you try

An honest Moon this way?

As for the gold, I put it by

Against a rainy day.”



I smiled and shook my head. "All right,
If you *must* know," said she,
"I change it into silver bright
Wherewith to tip the Sea.

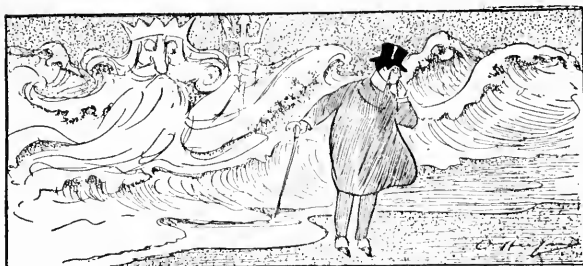
"He is so faithful and so good,
A most deserving case ;
If he should leave, I fear it would
Be hard to fill his place."

.

When asked if they accepted tips,
The waves became so rough ;
I thought of those at sea in ships,
And felt I'd said enough.

For if one virtue I have learned,
 'Tis *tact*; so I forbore
To press the matter, though I burned
 To ask one question more.

I hate a scene, and do not wish
 To be mixed up in gales,
But, oh, I longed to ask the Fish
 Whence came their silver scales!



HOW THE LION BECAME KING

ONCE in the hazy days of Yore
(I cannot very well be more
Explicit, since it was before
 Dates were invented).
Once on a time, as I began
To say, the Lion formed a plan
To undermine the rule of Man,
 Which he resented.

In answer to the Lion's call,
His fellow-creatures, great and small,
From earth and air came one and all

In Trepidation.

He then delivered a discourse,
And proved with eloquence and force
Man was their one and only source
Of Tribulation.

“What is he—taken at his best?

A mere pretence! Not even dressed,
If we his puny form divest

Of spoil he's looted.

The fact that we can far excel
His boasted Strength and Speed, as well
As Hearing, Sight, and Taste and Smell,
Is undisputed.

“ I am not boasting^{*} when I own
For Strength I’d back my claws alone
Against his battle-axe of stone ;

While, as to Vision,
’Tis nothing more than idle talk
To mention Man beside the Hawk—
The swift Horse, too, his clumsy walk
Views with derision.

“ Only Man’s Ignorance, I’m bound
To say, could possibly confound
The Scent and Hearing of the Hound

With his dull powers ;
As well his Taste, that gluts on fare
Like half-burnt Antelope and Bear,
With the fastidious Bee compare,
That sips the flowers.



“And yet,” the Lion said, “though we
Outshine Man to the last degree
Collectively, none holds as he
The Combination.”

In short, the moral of his theme
Was this : If Beasts would reign supreme
Their only practicable scheme
Was Federation.



And so, in view of Public Need,
The Hawk, Hound, Bee, and Horse
 agreed
To pool their Sight, Scent, Taste, and
 Speed;
And in due season
They made, *pro tem.*, the Lion King,
Intrusting him with everything
Upon condition he would bring
 Proud Man to reason.

The crafty Lion then proposed
To send an Embassy composed
Of those same four. As none opposed,
 They started straightway,

And, coming to Man's portals wide,
They entered, but no trace espied
Of Man, until (from the outside)
 He closed the gateway.

And there he kept them till they swore
To be his servants evermore,
And work his will, and bow before
 His rod of iron :
The Dog to watch, the Hawk to kill,
The Horse to carry and to till,
The Bee with sweets his jars to fill.
 All save the Lion—

The Lion stayed at home—and purred,
And kept thenceforth the crown conferred
Pro tem., and nothing more was heard
 About Conditions.

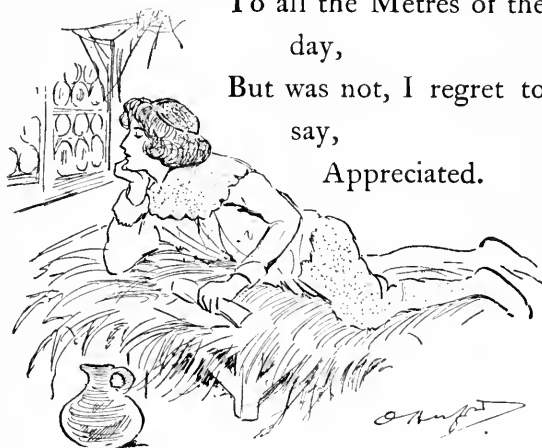
So ends my tale. Perchance it brings
Some light to bear on certain things—
Such as the Origin of Kings,
And Politicians.



THE WAKEFUL PRINCESS

ONE Time there lived (that is to say,
If half a crust of bread a day
And sleeping on a bed of hay
May so be rated)

A Gentle Youth who tuned his lay
To all the Metres of the
day,
But was not, I regret to
say,
Appreciated.



In Market-place or Public Way
He read his ode or sang his lay,
As was the custom of the day,
But none suggested
A Laurel Wreath or Crown of Bay :
Instead, one morn, to his dismay,
While spouting forth a Tragic Play,
He was arrested.

In Irons he was led away,
And, by a Justice stern and gray,
For blocking up the Public Way
He was indicted.
Then, since he had nowith to pay
The Fine (a trifle anyway),
To leave the town without delay
He was invited.

There was no choice but to obey—
He left the town at break of day,
Yet still his heart was brave and gay ;
 Fate could not queer him.
For was it not the month of May,
Were there not flowers beside the way,
And little lambs to sport and play,
 And birds to cheer him ?



He journeyed on for many a day ;
The Peasants gave him Curds and Whey;
For aught I know the Fairies may
 Some Food have found him.
At night he slept beneath a Bay
Or Laurel Tree, and, I dare say,
Dreamed he was Laureate, and they
 Were twined around him.

Indeed, his only trouble lay
In this, that tho' his spirits gay
And gentle Heart and winning way
 Charmed and delighted
All whom he met, yet, strange to say,
To hear his verses none would stay—
Even the Peasants ran away
 When he recited.



But he was not the sort that say,
“Oh, woe is mine—alack-a-day!”
He lived for Hope, and in some way
Was bound to find it.
“What matter! Let them go,” he’d say;
“Each to his taste—henceforth I’ll play
And sing to Birds alone, for they
Don’t seem to mind it.”

And so he journeyed many a day,
Till now at last his darkening way
Lies thro' a forest dim and gray;
 Yet, nothing daunted,
Though hoary branches bar the way,
And twisted roots his steps betray,
And ghostly voices seem to say
 The place is haunted,

Singing a Carol blithe and gay,
He presses on, nor does he stay,
Until at last the light of day
 His sight surprises.
And now a little winding way
Leads, through a meadow pink with May,
To where, not half a mile away,
 A Palace rises.

He wandered on, his thoughts astray,
Framing a little Roundelay
And weaving garlands of the May
 (For whom not guessing),
Until before him suddenly
There loomed a gateway grim and gray,
Whose dark doors yielded to the sway
 Of his light pressing.



And lo ! a garden gleaming, gay
With flowers in dazzling array,
And fountains flashing silver spray,
 And bowers shady ;
And on an emerald bank there lay
A creature fairer than the day,
Yet sadder than a moonlight ray—
 A wondrous lady.

Abashed the Poet turned away,
When a low voice entreated, “ Stay !
Read me that little Roundelay
 I heard you singing.”

It was as though upon him lay
A spell that forced him to obey,
And he recited it straightway
In voice clear ringing.

A dreamy, languid, far-away
Expression dims her eyes as they,
Like violets at droop of day,
Are closing—closing.
The Poet ends his Roundelay,
And turns to hear what she may say,
And finds to his complete dismay
The Princess dozing.

Then rose a cry : “ She sleeps ! Hurray !
The Princess sleeps ! Oh, joyful day !
The spell is broken—Rise, I pray,
 Oh, sweet song-maker.”
’Twas the King spoke, “ Arise, I pray :
I make you Laureate this day ;
My daughter’s hand, too, by the way,
 Is yours—don’t wake her.”



A MODERN DIALOGUE

SCENE—*On Manhattan Island. Time*
—*To-day. Hour—Ten-thirty. Per-*
sons of the play :

SIBYL. *A dream of beauty, half-awake,*
In filmy disarray—about to take
Her morning tub. In speech with her the
while

Is ROBERT. *He is dressed in riding style.*

SIBYL—Why, Bob, it's you! They got
your name all wrong.

I'm sorry that I made you wait
so long.

BOB— Only six minutes by my watch—
it's true

A minute seems a year, awaiting
you !

But Time is merciful and I rejoice
That I am still alive to hear your
voice.

SIBYL—A very pretty speech, for you,
indeed.

But what extenuation can you
plead

For waking ladies at the break of
day

From peaceful slumbers, sir !

BOB— Oh, come, I say !

It's half past ten !

SIBYL— Well, it was nearly three

Before I got to bed !

BOB— Good gracious me !
I'm sure I'd no idea it was so late.
Why, I was riding in the Park at
eight
And looked for you. I own I
felt abused ;
Last night you said——

SIBYL— I beg to be excused
From keeping foolish promises,
when made
At two A.M., by moonlight. I'm
afraid
My memory's no better than a
sieve.
So you expected me? The Lord
forgive
Your trusting soul !

BOB— It is His *métier* !

SIBYL—Don't be outrageous, or I'll run
away.

BOB— Ah, no ; don't go. I will be good,
I swear !

'Twas a quotation, Heine, or Vol-
taire,

Or some fool cynic fellow. By
the way,

If you have nothing on, what do
you say

To breakfasting with Peg and me
at noon

At the Casino ?

SIBYL— Well, that's rather soon ;
I can't be ready for an hour or
more.

BOB— Come as you are, you know that
I adore

Your ladyship in any sort of gown;
Besides, there's not another soul
in town.

Come as you are; there'll only be
we three.

SIBYL—Well, I like that! It's fortunate
for me

This is a telephone and not that
new

Invention one can talk and *see*
through, too!

What's that you said?

BOB— I didn't speak at all
I only *thought*.

SIBYL— Well, *don't*! Suppose we call
The breakfast half past one instead
of noon?

BOB (*joyously*)—
Then you will come?

SIBYL— I swear !

BOB— Not by the moon ?

SIBYL (*laughing*)—

No, you may count on me. Now

I must fly.

One-thirty—don't forget—Good-
by !

BOB— Good-by !

(*They ring off.*)

THE HEART OF ICE

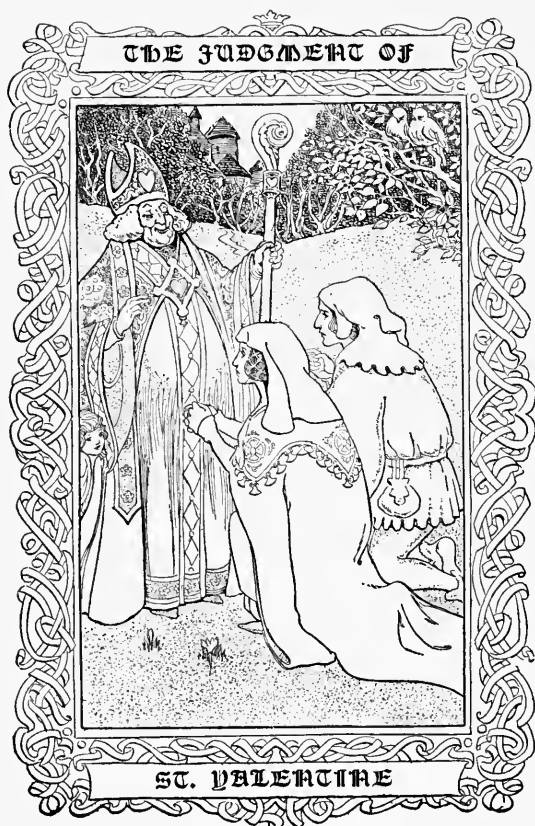
NOW whither are you flying
And on what game intent,
Cupid? There's no denying
On mischief you are bent.
What is the use of trying
To look so innocent?

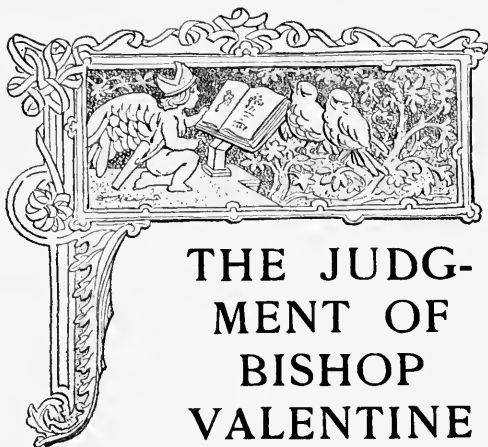
What means your empty quiver?
Did heart of some coquette
Your golden arrows shiver?
Or did you, boy, upset
Your darts in Lethe's river,
Or break them in a pet?

What is it you're concealing,
My patience to annoy?
A heart you have been stealing,
Or some such foolish toy?
Come, now—no double-dealing!
Out with it—Cupid, boy!

“I have,” quoth Cupid, shyly,
“A thing wherewith to hew
Cold hearts” (he hinted slyly
That such a heart I knew).
“’Tis recommended highly—
An ice-pick—what say you?”

Gravely I shake my finger
At Cupid—" 'Tis indeed
The very thing to bring her
To reason, boy, so speed!
Fly, Cupid! Do not linger—
Jove grant you may succeed!"





THE JUDG- MENT OF BISHOP VALENTINE

ONE tyme a Youthe of faire degree
Didde looke upon a Mayde. Ah
me,

She was as coye as anye flow'r,
She stole hys harte in thatte sayme how'r.
Alle vainlie he to Love didde calle,
Ye blinde Godde holp hym notte atte alle.

To Bishop Valentine thenne hies
Ye Youthe, ye Damosel likewyse,
Ande each 'gan tell hys tayle of griete.
Each sayd ye other was ye thiefe.
“Zounds!” cried ye Sainte, “this brawle
must cease.
I'll binde ye bothe to keepe ye peace.”
Whereat ye twain in nowyse loath,
“Pray then wyth one bond binde us
bothe.”
Loude laughed ye Sainte, “Perdi! 'Tis
done!”
And made ye Youthe and Mayden one.

.

Lady, anent this suit of mine
In search of precedents, I waded
Through ancient lore, and found this fine
Old Judgment, in a parchment faded.
If you will ponder the last line
And be by wise example aided,
We, too, will make Saint Valentine
Our Judge, and—compromise, as they
did.

THE BACHELOR GIRL

HERE'S to the Bachelor Girl
Who fain her charms would
cloister.

She is a precious pearl
That will not leave the oyster.

She is a proud sweet-pea
That scorns to be a vine,

And lean upon a tree
Or round a stick entwine.

“What ! lean upon a stick !
Oh, no ! I'm not that sort—

I will grow branches thick
And be my own support !”

‘ Beware, O pearl of price,
 Lest you be cast to swine ;
O proud sweet-pea, think twice
 Ere you refuse to twine !
O Bachelor Girl, we drink
 Confusion to your plan ;
Beware, lest Fate shall link
 You to a Spinster Man !
O change, ere ’tis too late,
 The choker tall and silly,
The tweeds—the hat we hate,
 For something soft and frilly !
Take off the stockings blue,
 (We will avert our gaze),
Then will we drink to you
 Long life—and happy days !



Mephisto

WE'VE drunk to everything we
know,

From Lang Syne to The Ladies ;
Now, one more Toast before we go—

Mephisto, Prince of Hades !
When sober we are wont, 'tis true,

To bury, not to praise him ;
But let us give the De'il his due,
And toast him while we raise him.

For tho' his company we're taught

To shun, there's no denying
Mephisto never yet was caught
Beneath false colors flying.

He wears his coat and plume of red
With candor so unswerving
We must applaud, although 'tis said
He took some points from Irving.
Think of the Stage, think of the Church,
Without their villain ruddy,
If Old Nick left them in the lurch
Without an understudy !
As well " Othello " played without
The Gentleman of Color,
Or " Hamlet " with the Prince left out :
Could anything be duller ?
A world from all temptation free
Would sadly lack in flavor ;
And what would Untried Virtue be
But Salt without its savor ?

To pawn his soul the sinner goes
More than half-way to meet him,
Yet when Mephisto would foreclose
He does his best to cheat him.
In Church to-day we sound his Knell,
To-morrow at a revel
We fall to raising him—and—well,
We treat him like the Devil.
So let us toast our Foe of Foes,
Long may we live to rout him.
Here's to Mephisto! Goodness knows
What would we do without him.
And, good Mephisto, do not spurn
Our Toast with mocking laughter,
Nor yet the compliment return—
By Toasting *us* hereafter!

A CORNER IN CURLS

ONCE on a time when Men were Bold
And Women Fair—to be precise—
A Princess lived whose
Hair was Gold
Beyond the Dreams
of Avarice ;

Beauty she had and
Wealth untold,
Besides a Fabulous
Amount
Of Jewels rare and Crowns of Gold,
And Suitors more than she could count.



Such Suitors! Tho' her Fingers Fair
Had been as leaves upon the Trees
They still were far too few to wear
The Rings they offered, on their Knees.

In Coaches, Caravans, and Ships
The Suitors came in Flocks untold,
Happy to kiss her Finger-tips
And beg from her a Lock of Gold.

For tho' she seemed to Cupid's Dart
Impervious, and would not share
The smallest atom of her Heart,
She was most lavish with her Hair.



To all who craved the Golden Boon
She gave, until one Night her Maid
Exclaimed, "Alas! Your Highness soon
Will not have Hair enough to braid!"

Next day the Court was in a state,
The usual audience was refused,
A Notice hung upon the Gate—
" *The Princess begs to be Excused.*"

Daily the Throng of Suitors grew
And clamored madly at the door,
Until at length they formed a queue
Extending for a mile or more.

The Chancellor was in despair.
“ Princess, it comes to this,” he said,
“ That either you must lose your hair
Or I must surely lose my head !”

The Princess turned away her face.
“ Oh, dear,” she cried, “ this grieves me
sore ;
It will be hard to fill your place—
You were a first-rate Chancellor !

“ But do not grieve—I have a plan
To keep your head and save my Pride.”
Then to the marble gate she ran,
Unloosed her hair, stepped forth, and
cried :

“ Brave Suitors, look upon this Gold,
This mint of Curls—lo, I present
A share to each of you—behold
My Notes of Curl—at five per cent ! ”

A cheer rose from a Thousand Throats ;
The panic passed—and months flew by.
The Princess issued Tons of Notes,
When lo !—a Bolt from out the Sky—



A message came, brought by a Churl :
 “ Pont Morgan, Sultan of Peru,
Has bought up all your Notes of Curl,
 And all your Notes are falling Due ! ”

The Princess grew distraught with fears
 By Day. At night she tossed in Bed,
Dreaming an Awful Pair of Shears
 Hung by a Hair above her Head.



At last the Fatal Morning came,
And with it came Pont Morgan, too,
With Awful Shears to press his claim,
And an Enormous Retinue.

“The Law is Just!” the People cried;
“And She the Penalty must pay!”
The Shears their Awful Jaws spread wide,
When suddenly a Voice cried, “Stay!”



An Unknown Damsel, Pale and Proud,
And clad in Silken Cap and Gown,
Strode swiftly through the gaping crowd,
And struck the Awful Scissors down.

“Beware!” she cried, “Proud Sultan, ere
You touch a Hair of that Fair Head;
For know you not that Every Hair
Is numbered—as the Prophet said?”

“Show me the Notes—see, here is writ
A number plain across each Bond,
And you may only draw for it
The numbered Hair to correspond.

“So pause, Pont Morgan, ere you draw
A Single Hair from that Gold Head ;
If it be wrong—then by the Law
Your Life and Lands are forfeited !”



“Hurray! Hurray! The Maid is Right!”
The People cried with mad uproar.
The Sultan turned a deadly white,
And fell in Fits upon the Floor.

“O Lady, whosoe’er you be,
Claim what you will in all my Land!
The Princess cried. “I am,” said he,
“Not Maid, but Man—I claim your
Hand.”

“’Tis yours! Right gladly will I be
Your Bride—for in Creation’s Plan
I never dreamed to find,” said she,
“A Portia’s Logic in a Man!”



THE HYDRANT- HEADED MONSTER

Being an epistle to Paul. From Temperance

IT comes ! The monster rearing high,
Against the lurid western sky,
Its horrid, hissing Hydrant Heads,
While o'er the shuddering land it sheds

A dreary pall of waste and woe
And chilling streams of H²O.
Now saints defend us, one and all,
And most especially Saint Paul,
Thou patron saint of Honest Fighting
And Common Sense and Letterwriting,
Who one time, for his "stomach's sake,"
Bade Timothy the wine cup take ;
Stay now this Water Fiend's advance
And save thy servant Temperance,
Ere Abstinence, that glum wet-nurse
Of Dire Dyspepsia, Chills, and worse,
Blow out the Lights of Love and Mirth,
And so asphyxiate the Earth.

TO MY TOY CANARY



WEE saffron sage,
Make-believe bird, fluffy,
absurd,
In mimic cage
Through beady eyes you scrutinize
A Noisy Age.

You boast no "Tree,"
No painted shell your Natal Cell,
Your Pedigree,
Neatly displayed, reads simply, "Made
In Germany."

What do I care
Tho' to fresh seed you pay no heed—
Since on Plain Air
You gayly feast? Of that at least
I have to spare.

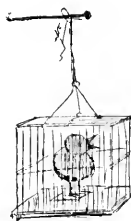
You do not pour
From your wide bill a gladsome trill,
Thanks be, therefore!
The best of tune, repeated, soon
Becomes a bore!

You simply stare
When I exclaim "Wilhelm" (your name);
You do not care
For William Hohenzollern, tho'
His name you bear.

What would you say
If William the Unsilent, he
Should come your way?
And fume, and pout, and storm — and
shout,
“ Lèse-Majesté ! ”

’Twould vex his pride
To see you hold that Gift of Gold
To him denied—
“ Silence,” the sole and only rôle
He has not tried.

Fear not his grim,
Imperial ire ; no torture dire,
No dungeon dim,
Your fate shall be : This land is free—
At least from him.



Wee saffron sage,
Pipe all day long your silent song
While by your cage,
Musing, I let my soul forget
The Noisy Age.





THE HAND OF TIME



HE dreams beneath lamplight
pale,

Like Beauty in the fairy-tale
Of Messrs. Grimm.

And as I gaze, behold, a
Thing,

A shape, a face white, menacing,
Hangs o'er her 'mid a ghostly ring
Of figures dim.

Now o'er the figures dark I see
A hand which moves relentlessly,
Remorseless, black.

The hand of Time—and through me flit
The Solemn words by Omar writ,
“Not all your piety nor wit
Can lure it back.”

She sighs, she stirs, her lids uncloset
Like petals of a pearly rose
After the rain.

And as she notes, with startled eye,
The Station Clock, I hear her cry,
“It’s twenty minutes past—oh, my!
I’ve missed my train.”



ENVOI

*"OH, Winter, must you leave so soon?"
Said Spring as Winter turned to go.
"If only you could stay till June,
And help to make my garden grow."*

*So back again that night he goes
To see the flowers, how they grow.
Poor things, they looked so cold, he throws
O'er them a coverlet—of snow.*

*Next morning Spring was full of woe
To find her flowers frozen—dead.
“The Fool I never thought he'd go
And take me at my word,” she said.*



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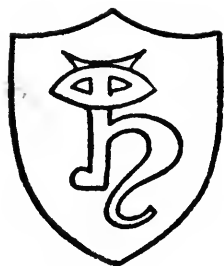
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